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Congress will try new ways to help U.S. businesses succeed in China. Lawmakers are continuing their high-profile campaigns to force China to open its markets further, stamp out rampant product piracy and allow the Chinese yuan appreciate faster against the dollar. But U.S. businesses also want federal action on other, lower-profile issues -- and Congress is ready to respond. Look for Reps. Rick Larsen (D-WA) and Mark Kirk (R-IL), cochairmen of the House of Representatives' 52-member U.S.-China Working Group, to introduce a series of bills in the next few weeks.

Expect more help for small and midsize firms that export to China. The difficulties and expenses of establishing operations in and trade relationships with the East Asian juggernaut are often so great that they dissuade smaller players from even trying. One bill will make sure smaller firms receive more attention from the 20 export assistance centers that the Commerce Department's U.S. Commercial Service operates in China.

Another measure will fund an expansion of U.S. diplomatic missions in China to make room for representatives of more U.S. federal agencies. This should speed up efforts to resolve numerous bilateral trade disputes and the frequent regulatory and legal hassles faced by U.S. companies in China.

Congress also plans to beef up funding for Chinese language education in the U.S. Roughly 200 million Chinese citizens have some knowledge of English, but only 20,000 U.S. citizens of non-Chinese descent have some knowledge of Chinese. This is clearly a handicap in the bilateral business game.

Lawmakers also want to spend more to help U.S. students go to China and to increase cooperation between the U.S. and China on energy efficiency and on limiting the growth of carbon emissions.

On the whole, these bills will be less controversial than many others focusing on U.S.-China relations that have circulated through Congress in recent years. An example of the more

aggressive approach is a bill proposed by Sens. Charles Schumer (D-NY) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) in the 109th Congress that would have slapped a 27.5% tariff on all imports from China unless Beijing sped up efforts to allow the yuan to appreciate against the dollar. This legislation sparked concern in much of the U.S. business community that it could damage the bilateral trading relationship. By contrast, the bills that Larsen and Kirk put forward should enjoy strong support from business groups as measures aimed at promoting U.S. competitiveness.